TOWN
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HURCH

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No. 45
September, 1948

Church Cooperation in Ashfield, Massachusetts

DONALD ZIMMERMAN

When St. John's Episcopal Church in Ashfield, Mass. was facing the change of vicars in the early part of 1945 it was learned that the Congregational Church in the same town was also seeking a new pastor. By serving other nearby Episcopal churches a vicar could find an adequate means of support, although St. John's was not able to pay more than $1500 per year by itself. But the Congregational church, capable of paying $1800 per year, was not able to find a man to meet its needs at that figure.

These two churches have buildings across from each other on the street which runs through the center of the town. Ashfield itself is scattered over a farm area in the Berkshires and populated by approximately 1,000 persons. There are no other churches in the town. The Roman Catholic people find it necessary to go to near-by Conway to attend Mass. Neither Bishop Lawrence nor the vicar were keen about spreading the ministry into another parish and forcing the vicar and his family to be members of two distinct communities. It would be better, they thought, to meet the pagan forces head-on in one community than simply to "fence with" evil in two communities.

Happy Relations

The Episcopalians and the Congregationalists had always been on the most congenial of terms. There were no distinct groups in either local church, separated beyond any hope of fusion. On the other hand, the two churches did not wish to "federate" and become "one" for purposes of worship and administration. The Congregational denomination might have non-Congregational ministers in their associations. Consequently neither the local church nor higher authorities would object to an Episcopal minister preaching in their church.

The result was that the Rev. Philip H. Steinmetz candidated in the Congregational Church, submitted to the usual examination, and was regularly called to be the pastor of the church. Whereupon Bishop Lawrence appointed Mr. Steinmetz to be vicar of St. John's. The Steinmetz family set up residence in the Episcopal vicarage and he became the only minister in the community. The Congregational Church pays $125 per year to St. John's (from the rental of their parsonage) toward the cost of the vicarage.

At first the two churches paid $1500 each toward the minister's salary of $3000 per year. However, the Congregational church voluntarily arranged to pay $1800 and the Episcopal Church to pay $1200, thus equalizing the difference in the size of the two congregations and making unnecessary Mr. Steinmetz' work in a neighboring parish. The next year St. John's increased its share to $1300, making a total salary now of $3100, plus vicarage and plus pension.

Mr. Steinmetz has Holy Communion at 8:00 A.M. on Sunday and the Episcopal service with a sermon at 10:00 A.M. The Congregational Church has its service at the usual hour, 11:15 A.M. The latter service is conducted in keeping with their traditional order which was established by previous ministers. In the afternoon there is a United Youth Group composed of all the young people in the town. The young people have been the nucleus for church membership classes and almost every one of them has chosen one church or the other for his own, and has been confirmed or made his confession of faith. When a denominational rally is held the entire group attends regardless of which church they are members.

United Program

Next fall the Sunday school boards and the minister hope to unite the Sunday school. They will use—as they already do—whatever curricu-

lum materials most adequately meet the needs of the pupils and teachers of each class. Each church treasurer will pay for the materials in proportion to the number of pupils enrolled from his church. As a result of this merger the teachers who have taught "only out of a sense of duty" will be relieved and only willing, trained teachers will be on the staff. The Episcopal church has only a one-room building. The united school will make available the more spacious Congregational parish house. Besides, the overly large number of boys in one Sunday school will tend to equalize the unusually large number of girls in the other and a more balanced program will result.

When Mr. Steinmetz was asked if he expected a definite union to result he explained that this was not a matter of church union. Federation is economically impossible, dissolution and absorption of either congregation is not likely. He said, "This is a program of mission strategy. We are trying to Christianize the community with a united program." So it is! The minister calls on every home indiscriminately. He keeps a birthday book and calls on the person the day he is celebrating his anniversary. The map of his parish shows a large number of unchurched families. Those he visits regularly. During the summer he will have an assistant—not an Episcopalian—who will be responsible for seeking to evangelize those homes. This assistant will be Mr. Kenneth T. Taylor of Union Theological Seminary, a member of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

The Way It Works Out

On the fifth Sundays of the month a united service is held in alternate churches and is made the occasion for a special function. Once the Bishop was the guest of honor on that Sunday. By this method the two groups are learning to worship and to work together. Sometimes a family will attend the church other than its own—the Episcopalians will get the same sermon at the Congregational church if they have been delayed beyond the earlier hour. The Congregationalists will get an early start for a Sunday visit at a distance if they attend the Episcopal service.

Each week bulletins are sent to every home in the community. The only difference is the cover. The Episcopalians read the Congregational "Order of Service" each week and the Congregationalists know when the Vestry meets. New members for either church are listed and Protestant baptisms become community functions.

The project proves that churches of such vast differences *can* work together. But it must be added that certain factors of success are inherent in the Ashfield project:

1. *There are no extreme differences in "churchmanship."*

2. *Social, economic and cultural differences are not apparent.* It is a united community.

3. *The minister is adaptable.* College at Princeton gave him a Presbyterian background; seminary at Union made him interdenominational in his outlook; he believes in a community ministry; he is an expert in visual education, and a fair-minded administrator of both churches according to their own tradition.

4. *Respect for cooperation with both denominations is essential.* Mr. Steinmetz is an active member on Congregational Association committees. He stresses their benevolence causes *in their way*. He knows his own ecclesiastical limits and does not go beyond them, thus maintaining friendly relations with his own brethren, in spite of the objection of some that he is aiding and abetting heresy and schism rather than opposing it as his vows demand.

5. *No strict agreement must be adhered to.* The program can change —and has changed—by proper official action. Thus, it can be adjusted to meet specific situations as they arise and can continue to be a "mission strategy" and not union simply for the sake of union. Mr. Steinmetz does not know where the simple original agreement is located. He is building on mutual love and on faith in his brother Christians.

The Congregational Church, Ashfield, Mass.

Rural Workers Fellowship Organized

An interested group of about 20 clergy and lay delegates to the 77th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Bethlehem met at the close of a convention for the purpose of organizing a Diocesan Rural Workers' Fellowship. Interest was expressed not only by delegates from town and country parishes, but by delegates from the city parishes as well. W. Francis Allison, secretary of the Fellowship, spoke of the work of the Fellowship before the Convention and acted as temporary chairman of the meeting. William Schmidgall, of St. Peter's Church, Tunkhannock, Pa., was elected chairman and was instructed to make arrangements for a formal meeting early in the fall. William McClelland, Jr., of St. Mark's Church, New Milford, and Burke Rivers, of St. Stephen's Church, Wilkes-Barre, together with the chairman were elected to serve as a nominating committee and also as a program committee for the first meeting. Mr. Allison outlined some of the many activities and interests of the Fellowship and answered questions. The meeting in the fall will probably be on one of the Ember Days in September.

—*The Southern Churchman*

Religion and Life in the Countryside

AARON H. RAPKING

Religion and education are twins the development of personality. ucation without religion tends ward paganism and religion with- t education tends toward fanati- m. They are as basic in the plan God for His family as light and rkness, sunshine and rain, heat d cold, day and night, joy and rrow, the material and spiritual ases of individual and community e. They are part of each other.

We cannot think clearly about the eaning and significance of life thout being aware of the fact that rship and work, the Sabbath and ek-day, are as related as our hands d feet, our eyes and ears, our inds and souls.

We cannot think clearly about life we think of what we do on Sunday sacred and of what we do the rest the week as secular. What then is e relationship of Christian Educa- on to changing community life? It ust be clear to every thoughtful rson that change is the essence of e. We are changing, our homes e changing, our communities are anging, America is changing.

hurch and School

Our teaching and preaching have nded to bring about an unnatural lationship between the making of living and the making of a life. Ve have emphasized the fact that ere is a will of God for our souls, ut we have said little about the ill of God for our bodies. We don't preciate the relationship between e school and the church. Both in- itutions tend to bring about an nnatural unrealistic division of life to compartments.

The church would have us believe at our salvation depends on the essage and program of the church, hile the school would have us be- ve that salvation is dependent on quiring knowledge. The church d school are as interdependent as ir hands—one without the other ould be greatly handicapped. Both e essential in the development of our personalities and our relationship in family and community life.

Christian Education should help us feel the presence of God in our lives as we work with Him in the garden, in the fields, in our homes, in our factories, in our schools, in our churches. We are as dependent on God for life as plants are dependent for life on sunshine and rain.

In our confused world we need more of the insight and understanding expressed in this old Chinese proverb:

If there is righteousness in the heart,
There will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character,
There will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There will be peace in the world.

All People

"Jesus was in love with people, not just church people, all people—rich young ruler, beggars, sinful Mary, esteemed church leaders, children and unreached people. Through all the ages every community has had people like these whom Jesus loved, but the Christian church has often neglected to love all people. Too often a church spends all of its energy perpetuating itself, so that it has little energy left with which to love the unreached and to serve the total community. Such a policy not only neglects the community, but also spells doom for the church, for 'he that seeketh to save his life shall lose it' applies to institutions too. A church becomes a parasite upon the community to the extent that it is absorbed within itself. Its fruits to society are just as limited as are the fruits of self-centered commercial agencies which exploit the people."

—JAMES WYKER

Lancaster, New Hampshire

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The Role of Rural Communities

SAMUEL W. BLIZZARD, JR.

The rural community is still an important cog in the social and economic machinery of our national life in spite of the tendency to underestimate its importance. If the number of people living in cities or in the countryside were the sole standard by which we are to judge the rural community, it might be easy to think that rural life is less important than it was formerly. It is probably truer to say that the dominance of the city in our way of life is possible because of the increasing efficiency of rural communities in performing their role.

Not only do rural communities produce the food and fiber that city people consume but they also function as a replacement center for urban population. Cities have been described as "kinds of colonies that the country districts are obliged to re-people each year." Cities do not seem to be able to reproduce themselves. If they did not receive new residents from the country, they would decline in size.

Rural Roots

There are also functions which the country serves that are less tangible, that cannot be measured in terms of money or people. Perhaps the most important of these intangible functions is the role that the country plays in forming our way of life. Some of the cultural flowers that bloom in the city have their roots and are nourished in the country. With the focus of our attention on the city, it is easy to forget these rural roots of our life.

In the country people are more informal. They are not only more likely to know who their neighbor is, but chances are they will know his first name. Not so in the city. If you live in an apartment house, you may not even know what your neighbor looks like except that he makes noises at strange hours of the night with his parties. In the country you call people by their given name, but in the city you use their title and their family name. Social organization in the rural areas is relatively simple, but in the urban world it is highly specialized. Things change less frequently in the country. Customs remain the same for decades; and, should a newcomer suggest that things might be done in a different way, he might be told, "We don't do things that way."

Out in the countryside people are more used to living with one another. They are more adjusted. They know the quirks of their neighbor. They are aware of the things that make him mad, and they know how to make him happy. Each person is tied closer to the family. He tries to do the things that the family wants done. Father and son, and mother and daughter, spend more time with one another and work on joint projects. In the city, however, home is more like a boarding house where one has a place to sleep and a place to eat when he needs it.

Gradually, of course, as country people are made a part of urban life, they lose some of these things that they have brought from the country. The pattern of their life may be outwardly changed, but their basic training and outlook remain the same. They may get used to the smell of asphalt streets on a hot summer day but they still have a yen for the odor of new-mown hay.

Unity

One reason why we are likely to forget the rural roots of our society is that country and city life are more and more being blended together. Farmers and their tradesmen are no longer in the majority as residents in the countryside. An increasing proportion of those who live in the country have nothing to do with farming. The rural nonfarm population (as these folk are called by the Census) made up twenty-two per cent of our population, while farm residents made up nineteen per cent, according to April 1947 estimate[s] Factory workers increasingly want t[o] have a place in the country. Th[e] quickness of modern transportatio[n] now makes it possible for them to d[o] this. Many men who live in th[e] country and work in the city can ge[t] to their homes quicker, or about a[s] quickly, by using an automobile, a[s] some workers who must use th[e] streetcar or the busline.

As cities spill over into the rura[l] areas, the farmer and his city cousi[n] are meeting more often than the[y] used to. When the plumber move[s] outside of town and builds a plac[e] in the country, he starts to mak[e] himself a part of the community. I[f] he has children in school, he and hi[s] wife are likely to join the PTA. O[r] they may associate themselves with a[] church. In this way some of the old[] cleavages between the city and th[e] country are being healed.

Summary

There is a danger that we may underestimate the influence of rural culture in our nation. We may pull up the roots of our way of life and expect the flower to continue to bloom or fruit to grow. The role of the rural community remains the same. It still produces our food and fiber. It still raises and trains more than its share of children. It is increasingly a place for city workers to live. All of these functions are being performed with greater efficiency than they were formerly.

In the future the rural community will still serve as a farming area, but it will also be a suburb of our cities.

"A Survey of Catholic Weakness"

• The National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, Iowa, publishes a booklet under the title given above, using an introduction and a plan by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti. In the booklet are found many figures on Roman Catholic churches in rural and in urban communities. Many of the statistics are presented by dioceses of the church. Single copies, $1.00 each.

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Where the Road Divides

C. R. MCBRIDE

It was a Friday evening. The monthly meeting of the 4-H Club had adjourned and most of the young people had gone home. Among those who remained were five boys of high school age. Their laughter filled the hall, and adult leaders paused now and then to watch them in their "horse play."

These five boys had been together in the public high school all week. They had played football and participated in other school activities. At the end of the week they had come to the hall and joined in the activities of their 4-H Club. In all these things they had been together, sharing joys, hopes and ambitions. Such sharing is good, for it is in this way that communities are built.

In two more days the fellowship road these boys had travelled through the week would divide at its most strategic place. On Sunday morning two of the boys would rise early and hurry out of the community to attend mass at the Roman Catholic church in a near-by town.

Another boy would leave the community to attend the services of a Lutheran church. The other two boys would be in attendance at the Sunday school and worship service of the local community Baptist church. Thus, the road the boys had travelled through the week would divide and they would go separate ways at the place where all roads should meet.

Concerning the Situation

Many books and papers have been written on the problems of the rural church. We are aware of the cold disturbing fact that rural America is not being won to Christ. We even have a feeling, though we admit it with shame, that rural America is less Christian today than it was thirty-five years ago. Despite some signs of encouragement, the cultural and religious levels are declining, as is noted in the rise in delinquency and crime among rural young people.

We may seek to solve rural problems by trying to increase the salaries of rural ministers, by pouring in mission money to stem the tide, by having stronger denominational programs, better buildings and a dozen other things. But, after twenty years of living very close to the rural church, there is to my mind one real obstacle to the advance of Christianity in rural areas. That obstacle is the multiplicity of competitive churches in so many parts of the country. Before we can have a truly Christian community we must have a sense of spiritual unity.

Kinds of Division

Some may argue that the church has a message to proclaim. If the church proclaims its message, and the Spirit convicts of sin, there will, of necessity, be division in the community. And on this ground we have no argument except to point out that the church today is not dividing the community over moral issues. The voice of the church is so weak in some rural areas that when it attempts to cry out against sin, no one gives it any heed.

The division in so many rural communities comes at the point of so-called Christian doctrine. Christians divide the community into segments, each striving for supremacy. If a new family moves into town the local ministers run a foot-race to solicit them for membership in the respective churches.

In such set-ups, and we have hundreds of them in rural America, there is little attack on sin. The church's energy, like that of the elephant which can only work two or three hours a day, is used to keep itself alive. It is tragic that even as the church works to keep itself alive, it dies.

Leadership Passes to Others

While the churches are concerned with their own petty loyalties the leadership of the community passes into other hands.

The liquor interests are definitely giving leadership to some communities. In one community I found that the incentive behind a little "mardi gras" was a group of tavern owners and the local brewery.

The movie industry takes over the leadership in other communities. In the darkened movie house young and old receive incentive for action and go out to behave as have their heroes and heroines on the silver screen. Is it any cause for wonder that crime is said to be on the increase in rural America? What else can we expect when moral and spiritual leadership has passed from the church to the theatre?

But the picture is not wholly dark —there is some grey in it! In some places the leadership of the community has passed to the community high school. This is an improvement over the leadership of the tavern and the cinema. But, because of the materialistic approach of the school, it is far from what it ought to be. Frequently, in smaller communities, the leadership is in the hands of the Farm Bureau, the Grange or Farmer's Union.

Regardless of where present leadership rests it is, with few exceptions, outside the church. To that extent the church has forfeited its place in society and taken a back seat. The church's place should be at the front, leading the community into a better way of life.

How Lead Today

The question then arises, "How can the rural church regain its place of leadership?" Probably no one answer will cover the question. There are, however, a few suggestions that may prove of value:

First, the rural church will need a new vision of its task. It must recover from the humiliating and debilitating idea, "we are just a *little* country church." The same idea is carried in the frequent statement relative to a good pastor, "he is too good a preacher for us." The rural church must know that though it may be numerically small, it is not insignificant.

Furthermore, the best of all pastors will find their abilities challenged to the utmost in a rural community. The sin has been that ministers, instead of trying to meet the challenge of the country, have succumbed to the idea that they are too good for such a place and have sought urban pulpits.

Then, the church must know that it is the agency of God for the regeneration of men and the communities in which men must work out their destinies. The church is not here to serve its denomination. It is here to lead men into the Christian way of life.

Calls For Organization

Such a vision will, of necessity, call for new organization. Vision and organization go hand in hand, and a change of one will bring about a change in the other. So a better organization will help change the vision, and new visions will bring about a change in organization.

The first change in organization, and what seems now the most important change, is the elimination of the wasteful, unChristian competition between rural churches. Until this is done there is little hope of salvation.

In some places competition is being eliminated and lost leadership regained when the churches of the community or trade area agree to work together in meeting the problems of the area. Official boards, councils, youth groups and ministers meet and carefully plan the program needed for the community. Then each church applies its particular talents to doing the job. This has real merit.

The federated church offers another means of recapturing the leadership of the community. In the federated plan the churches of the community come under the leadership of one pastor for their worship and community service. Each church maintains a skeleton organization for the support of denominational missions and the transaction of certain business such as the holding of property or trusts that may be bequeathed to it. Prospective members indicate the group or denominatio they want to join. While the feder ated church is a step in the righ direction it leaves much to be d sired.

This, then, brings us to a thir possibility, the Community Church which owes allegiance to no denomi nation. In some cases the Communit churches are rendering excellen services but they have one handica which they seem unable to over come—adequate provision for ecu menical fellowship. A church in thi day and age cannot live to itsel alone. It needs fellowship with othe churches.

There is also the Community de nominational church to be con sidered. Here one denominationa church serves a whole community.

Does It Matter?

The final question which we raise concerns the importance of rural society and its church. Does it matter what happens to rural America and the rural church?

It would be easy to take the attitude that the future of our nation and our churches is to be found in the cities for thousands have already done so and one would be following in the main stream of thought.

But there are reasons why we cannot do this, first of which is that urban living does not yield great returns to society. Crowded quarters, tenement buildings, fouled air, are not wholesome. A way of life that permits one to be unaware of his next-door neighbor's sickness does not build a wholesome atmosphere for social development.

Rural America is not altogether the idyllic place poets have described. In the midst of its rustic beauty there are to be found slums, poverty, and disease of both body and mind. There are also great areas of ugly eroded land that cry out to God day and night for vengeance. And, as in the city, there are to be found small, carping, conniving spirits housed in human bodies.

Resources

But on the other side of the ledger rural America is the home of natural

ources. All humanity is dependent on land for its existence, and the d is in the care and keeping of al people. If they exploit it, per- t the topsoil to wash and blow ay, the fish, birds and game to be troyed, the time will speedily ne when men and women will ur out of the cities to scour the ntryside for a few potatoes or tur- os with which to keep body and il together.

Finally, rural America is the social d spiritual power house of the tion. People do not develop great ial and spiritual insight in the ss. For this there must be at hand e smaller unit of people, with the ietness and stimulation of nature. he heavens declare the glory of od." One must be able to see the avens to see the glory of God!

We must give heed to the rural eas of our nation because of their tential importance in the survival America and its churches! The urches are the natural leaders of ral America. But the rural urches are hardly half awake, and nominational authorities (with w exceptions) are sound asleep in is critical time. At the point where ey ought to be giving leadership id inspiration to men they set up, maintain, a division. People move ward until they reach the most ucial point in their existence, and ere the road divides.

Your Harvest Festival

The Committee on Town and ountry has ready the annual Order f Service for a Harvest Festival. he leaflet was prepared by the Rev. . Campbell Wyckoff, formerly of ne Board of National Missions, resbyterian Church in the U.S.A., ow on the staff of New York Uni- ersity. Single copies are 5c each; oo copies, $1.00. They may be pro- ured from the office of the Com- ittee on Town and Country, 297 ourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y. ooperating boards are also dis- ributing the leaflet.

Reminiscences

The Rural Church Institute, Barnes Hall, Ithaca, N. Y., has recently published "Some Reminiscences of the Development of the American Country Life Movement," by Liberty Hyde Bailey. This mimeographed leaflet contains significant remarks made by Dr. Bailey at the Rural Ministers' Family Camp—held at the Tompkins County Recreation Camp, under the sponsorship of The Rural Church Institute.

Dr. Bailey spoke in response to an invitation to tell about the Roosevelt Country Life Commission and the developments which followed its work. In doing so, he also shared some of his experiences at Cornell University. The price of the leaflet is 10 cents.

The nation's most eminent horticulturist, Dr. Bailey was professor of horticulture in Cornell University for fifteen years. In 1903 he was appointed dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture, which post he served for ten years. He set up the College's first departments of plant pathology, plant physiology, plant breeding, and soil technology. In addition to this he wrote over fifty books on plants and plant life and edited many more.

Some time in his teens, Liberty Hyde Bailey made a plan for his life: he would spend twenty-five years learning, twenty-five years teaching, and twenty-five years doing "what I like best." Accordingly, he retired from Cornell thirty-five years ago and began work on a scientific collection of his own which was later offered to Cornell and made a unit of the University. It was said to be the largest scientific gift ever made to Cornell.

Dr. Bailey says of his greenhouse: "It is an oasis in one's life . . . One has dominion." He has made researches on North American sedges, on blackberries and raspberries, and also on new world palms of which he has the finest collection in the world. He has also made important studies is rural economics, rural sociology and agricultural education.

Dr. Bailey recently celebrated his 90th birthday. Asked if he intended to write his autobiography, he answered: "That would be living in the past. And I am looking to the future."

Record Relief Shipments

• During 1947, a year marked by efforts of two continents to revive from the effects of war and its aftermath, the American Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches sent $14,500,000 in funds and relief commodities to Europe and Asia through their cooperative agency, Church World Service. This announcement by Dr. A. Livingston Warnshuis, Church World Service Executive Vice-President, said that aid went to 43 countries. This record, nearly a million dollars greater than the cooperative church overseas effort of 1946, represents the largest unified achievement ever made by the American churches, Dr. Warnshuis reported.

The Pastor's Office

Part of the ineffectiveness of the average church's program—whether in the rural or in the urban setting—is the result of the pastor's own attitude toward his people and his work in that field.

One of the ways to stress the importance of the church's vital work is for the pastor to install an office-study in the church building and to use it himself regularly. Then he should encourage his people to use it for personal interviews, for training classes, and for meetings of other community agencies.

With his office-study in the church building, the pastor gives his people an opportunity to come in to see him without being under the necessity of making a social call first in the pastor's home.

Like the doctor or lawyer, the pastor should consult with his people in private where an opportunity is given them to discuss freely the problems that bother them.

—GEORGE R. SWEENEY,
in the *Rural Church*

The Rural Church Building

Every church building serves two important purposes. First, it is a tool through which the church carries on its activities. But entirely apart from its practical utility is the fact that its condition reports the measure of the community's love of God. If it is carelessly kept, situated in a bedraggled and unkempt yard, unpainted and askew on its foundations, it says to all who pass by that here people do not care very much for God. On the contrary, if it is lovingly tended it proclaims more loudly than we can say that here God and His service are very precious to men.

Since we want to cultivate reverence, exaltation, and humility, along with freedom and fellowship in religion, we shall try to make the house of God beautiful because beauty lifts and enriches human life and so helps to purify human fellowship and deepen men's sense of the holiness of God and of the holiness of the life to which they are called.

Planning the Church

For building new churches, ministers must take the lead. First, they should be sure that the lot for the church building is adequate in size to insure not only proper setting but proper surroundings and space for parking. Then the type of church life that is to be fostered through the building should be considered and arrangements made that will be useful and necessary to gain the desired ends.

However, comparatively few ministers are called upon in our day to build new churches; more have to do with improving old buildings or with enlarging buildings that have become inadequate. Much can be done with such buildings. Literature applicable to your situation, along with a list of competent church architects, is available through the Interdenominational Bureau of Architecture, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. Get the help and literature that is offered.

—WALTER E. SCHILLING
in the *Rural Church.*

Rechurching Rural America

DON F. PIELSTICK

"Have you noticed anything significant about the calls we have made?" This was the question I asked the Rev. Harry A. Shewhart as together we made a community study of Hindsboro, Ill. Replying that he had not, I suggested that he think about it and see if he could find a common feature. Our next call was at the home of a recent widow who, with her husband, had retired from the farm a couple of years before his death. For sentimental reasons they had not transferred their membership from the open country church near the farm. This church, however, had been inactive for some years so, during her sorrow and loneliness, there had been no pastoral care.

As we left the home of the librarian a few minutes later, a slap on my back was accompanied by the exclamation, "I've got it!" That had been our sixth call on widows of former farmers, all of whom were social and cultural leaders of the town.

Hindsboro has been losing population since 1920. The stores, churches, school and (most of all) the social morale reveal the results. With less than five hundred people the town feels keenly the increasing competition of surrounding trading centers. The national trend toward enlarging the trade areas of the more affluent centers is a prediction of evil days ahead for all the Hindsboros.

Overchurched Communities

The churches are proving very slow to either understand or adapt themselves to the new situation. In the three counties studied in Illinois (Douglas, Hancock and Whiteside), overchurching is most acute in places like Hindsboro. They average a church building and program for each one hundred and twenty persons living within the incorporated limit. Because they do not have an adequate number of people to draw upon, the churches in these places are small—not only in membership but also in program, and in finances.

Take a look at what the too small unit does to the church program. Often the small church is maintained only by a worship service. Of the churches studied, the fifth representing the smallest churches had an average of only thirty-five at the chief service. Spread this number over the life span—from baby to grandparent—and what kind of an impression of divine worship is being instilled in the children and the youth, and what kind of an appeal is being made to the unchurched? Remember, one-fifth of the churches studied were like that, yet they represented only four and one-half per cent of the total church membership.

What Program?

Having such a small membership, it is impossible to sustain an adequate program. What happens to work with men in such churches? In twenty-nine churches, with memberships of less than one hundred, not one provided anything for men other than the worship service. The young people fared better, yet only about half the churches had a youth group.

The women were much better provided for with all but three of the churches having an essential organization for women. Is this what you would call an adequate organizational structure for a church? How can such a program challenge every phase of life with the Gospel of Christ? Are you convinced that the major portion of the rural population consists only of women? Must the small churches be content with a "feminine" constituency?

Now, look at the financial resources of the fifth representing the smallest churches. The average budget is about $1500. Inadequate as this is to underwrite a suitable program, from twenty-five to thirty per cent of the amount is given to denominational benevolences; about ninety-five per cent of the remainder

es to the preacher. The remainder
r maintenance and promotion?

'hat is the Best?

Is this the best Protestantism can
) in presenting the Gospel to youth,
en and children in these small
ral churches? Must one-fifth of our
urches be such anemic organiza-
ons, so poorly attended and finan-
d? Most people answer a hearty
No," but at the same time are re-
ctant to make a move toward im-
oving the situation. These church-
are something like the scaffolding
ound a new building. At one stage
was very essential but, as every
od builder knows, there comes a
me for the scaffolding to be taken
om its position on the exterior and
come an integral part of the build-
g. Somehow these small, inade-
iate units must be woven more
fectively into the structure of
hristendom. The larger parish, the
oup ministry and yoked fields are
forts to this end. They should be
ven more attention as worthy ex-
erimental methods.

These small churches are much
ke many small patches of land
und on most farms—too small to be
ltivated efficiently and too fertile
lie idle.

What They Say About Rural Life Sunday

Again we observed Rural Life
unday in our church. The Jolly
Iohawk 4-H Club presented a pro-
ram which they procured from the
Visconsin State 4-H Club office. The
oad Lake 4-H Club, newly organ-
ed, attended in a body also. The
heme was "Building better homes
oday for a more responsible citizen-
hip tomorrow."

—First Congregational Church,
Tomahawk, Wis.

In our Rural Life Sunday ob-
ervance the 4-H Club joined with us
dedicating our soil, our seeds, our
bors, our homes and ourselves to
ur Creator and Father.

—Emerald Grove Congregational
Church, Janesville, Wis.

Christian Missions and the Credit Union

MOSES N. DELANEY

The first six-week summer school for ministers and missionary women was held at Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1946. A course was offered on "The Rural Church and the Cooperative Movement." This course is reported by the secretary, Angle B. Owens of the recently organized New Hanover Credit Union at Wilmington, N. C. The following account is given by Mr. Owens:

"The idea of organizing a credit union among Negroes . . . at Wilmington, N. C., was brought to the attention of members of several churches in Wilmington by Mrs. Irene Maides during the latter part of 1946." The idea was kept forcibly before interested persons until a temporary organization was formed in the spring of 1947.

"On September 15, 1947, Mr. D. R. Graham, State Superintendent of Credit Unions, met with the group at Shiloh Baptist Church and organized the New Hanover Credit Union." Application was made for a certificate of organization and a charter two days later. The application was approved on October 4th, and the charter and certificate of organization were recorded in the office of the county clerk on the same day.

At the first meeting of its organized members the New Hanover Credit Union elected its credit and supervisory committees. In December, assets reached $137.88 and loans were made to two members. At the close of the year the membership had increased to sixty-seven.

In conference with Mrs. Maides it was reported that five churches were cooperating in the Credit Union: St. Stephen's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Shiloh Baptist Church, Ebenezer Baptist Church, First Baptist Church and Price Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Mrs. Maides is a member of Shiloh Baptist Church of which the Reverend J. H. Moore is the pastor. Mrs. Maides was awarded *The Shaw University Certificate of Award* in 1947 upon completing all the course requirements for this honor. She continues to study and to work in the Vineyard of the Master.

Mrs. Irene Maides, Missionary Worker, Shiloh Baptist Church, Wilmington, N. C.

For the most part, members of the New Hanover Credit Union are engaged in domestic service. Their background is largely agrarian, and through their credit union they aim to bear one another's burdens as they seek to improve their economic, social, moral and spiritual life in the church and community.

Have you a cheerful lady in your congregation, possibly home-bound most of the time? Such a person would be very happy to have a task concerned in the welfare of the congregation. Why not have her serve as your birthday secretary? Many church schools and congregations have someone responsible for sending a cheery birthday greeting to their members. Your older people will be happy to have some responsibility related to the ongoing activities of the church.

—The Party Line of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

"The Christian Year" in a Country Parish

WILLIAM L. BAILEY

One of the few "best sellers" among Christian books of the last hundred years has been "The Christian Year," of John Keble. In the year of his death it was selling at the rate of 110,000 copies a year. It is the lyric epic of a country parish. In the literature of the Country Church it ranks as do the ancient Hesiod's *Works and Days;* the *Georgics* of Vergil; or Hammerton's *The Sylvan Year,* as interpreters of the spirit of Country Life. It is a book that should be on the library table of every Country Minister.

Fruit of Experience

It is the fruit of the experiences (in a parish of never more than a thousand souls) of a man whom Coleridge called "the George Herbert of his day." John Keble was a personal friend of Wordsworth and did for the Church what the latter did for the country. They called him "Saint John" in college. The lives of few men better embody the unique spiritual genius of Jesus of Nazareth. His "best seller" was published anonymously to the very end, and the proceeds went into his Church and Parish.

Its chief purpose, and the informing spirit of his local work in Hursley as well as in his larger work in the national Church, was "to establish a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion." For it was a sermon of his that started the Oxford Movement in England, and gave that Church a new emphasis upon the principles and the Person of Jesus. In the heat of the Tractarian controversies of the day, Keble wielded the greatest influence, but always from the retirement of his village and as "a nightingale on the field of battle."

No other country minister in England has had a College endowed and named for him: Keble College, Oxford, with its doors open to the sons of country parsons, is even more of an honor to the genius of this man than the cenotaph which remembers him in Westminster Abbey.

Saintliness

Yet Newman (afterwards Cardinal) said of Keble: "How can I paint a man who will not sit for his picture." That is the essence of the spirit of John Keble. His was "a life hidden with Christ in God." There are all too few such in our day. He was not a "leader" in any usual sense of that word. Perhaps he remembered the saying of the Master: "Be ye not called 'leaders.' " He was rather a "saint," and his leadership was of the spirit. His soul shines in his face. Wordsworth writes of him:

> "Comfort have thou of thy merit,
> Kindly unassuming Spirit,
> Careless of thy neighborhood
> Thou dost show thy pleasant face
> On the moor and in the wood,
> In the land,—there's not a place,
> Howsoever mean it be,
> But 'tis good enough for thee."

Another says of him: "He was the most eminent good man in the church."

Yet there are few names that rank with his in the history of Protestantism in the nineteenth century. His power in affairs was the fruit of his most exalted idea of the pastoral office and a noble conception of the church.

Vicar of Hursley

These ideals of Christian work he expressed in and from his parish of two small villages. He was Pastor there—with a few short breaks, for nearly fifty years. He was the "first man in Oxford of his day." Fellow of Oriel, Tutor, Examiner, later Professor of Poetry, but always Vicar of Hursley. For some time he was a "circuit rider," riding on horseback from Oxford to a curacy.

The thing that drew him out of the academic world was typical of the man. The love of parents, of brothers and sisters, was one of the strongest forces in his life. It led him at least once to abandon marked preferment.

He soon found in a country parish the quiet and the close contact with the lives of the people that enables the soul to grow and a real "gospel" to express itself. We too often forget this in thinking of the merits of a country charge. Much of *The Christian Year* is the outgrowth of his first curacy.

In his oration as Professor of Poetry he proclaimed a revolutionary theory. He argued against the theory that "the poor" could not appreciate the beauties of nature or of art. "I won't have my poor fellows laughed at," was his quick protest when someone called them "clod-hoppers." He cited their fondness for the place of their birth, and youth, their tender speech about the dead and anxiety to obey their wishes, their half-superstitious forms of reverence.

Interpreting Nature

But as a Christian pastor he sought to interpret nature in its spiritual significance for their moral good. He is constantly quoting "*Consider* . . . the lilies of the field (the lily that has become the wheat, by God's Providence and Man's efforts) . . . the ravens . . . Lift up your eyes and look upon the open country. . . ." He seldom describes Nature for its *own* sake, but always for its lesson for Man. He seeks to interpret

> "The secret lore of rural things,
> The moral of each fleeting cloud and gale,
> The whispers from above that haunt the twilight vale."

He pictures Nature as the Censor of Man, who

> "Wakes the spectral form of War and Crime,
> When Nature sings of Joy and Life alone."

He was never tired of reminding his country-people that they must think

ith Saint Anthony, "My book is na-ıre, and it is always by me, if I ant to read the words of God." So often was with Jesus!

Keble built two new and beauti-ıl churches in his parish, and eatly repaired a third. He did the ost regular and untiring duty in eligious education. He wrote an dition of *The Christian Year* espe-ally for the instruction of children. The Christian Year everywhere ıpposes the church to be in a state f decay," and Keble was most prac-cal in his endeavors to infuse a new ›irit into it.

'astoral Counseling

The main staple of his life was the ork—the incessant, unsparing, lov-ng work—of a parish minister. One our every morning in week-day re-gious instruction, and two hours in unday school. He held daily chapel, eeking to do his people "service" in hose difficult days of agrarian riots, eform acts, Manchester insurrec-ions, and Tractarianism in religious ircles. He even revived an ancient sage and had a special "service" for vorking and laboring people at 5:30 ach morning of the work-days. He pecialized in "spiritual advice"—ome people were stupid enough to hink of it as a "confessional." He iterally "waited" on the sick, and vas available for their service at any ime. He regarded these forms of so-ial service as a more effective min-stry of The Word than the pulpit.

Keble stood strongly against the nerely utilitarian and material pirit of the reform of his day. He ıad almost as good an opportunity o study population and subsistence n his parish as did the Rev. Thomas Malthus, who has become famous. And his solution was different. He ›pposed all Relief for able-bodied adults or for children under any cir-cumstances and was instrumental in getting the poor law amended to hat effect. He favored emigration ınd finally secured the change which ›ermitted parishes to advance money on the security of the poor ates for assistance to emigrants. This went to the very roots of the ›roblem of poverty.

When there were agrarian riots in his neighborhood he rode out fearlessly and goodnaturedly with the mob, arguing with them and keeping them from serious mischief by his display of humor.

Just as unique was his siding with the farmers as against the laborers by insisting that farmers could and should *pay* only such wages as general business conditions warranted. As a matter of *business,* he held, business principles must be observed. As between man and man, but in no sense as a *right,* he set the example of an almost eccentric generosity.

John Keble influenced and lead his rustics in the same spirit that made his name synonymous with the greatest events in English Protestantism in his day. It was a spirit born of the sense that,

> "God hath sown and He will reap,
> Growth is slow when roots are deep."

The soil of a country parish is a good place to dig in.

—Reprinted from Home Lands

Inter-Seminary Rural Life Conference

Forty seminary and college students and faculty from numerous points in the Middle West gathered at Merom Rural Life Center on the banks of the Wabash river to hold an Inter-Seminary Rural Life Conference in May. Beginning in 1940, it was hoped that these conferences could be held annually but war conditions made this impossible. Plans are already being made for another conference next spring.

The opening address, "Factors Influencing Rural Life in America Today," was given by John Berry of Eureka College. The theme of the next session, "A Theology for Rural Life," was led by Victor Obenhaus of the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago. Stanley Hamilton, secretary of the Rural Life Association, presented a paper on "Education and the Rural Home" and served as consultant leader throughout the conference.

All participants in the conference agreed that the afternoon under the direction of Messrs. Binning and Anderson, Soil Conservation District Director and County Agent respectively, was of inestimable value. Types of soil conservation were demonstrated and results of projects begun some years previously were reviewed. Fortunately there were in attendance at the conference several men who, as members of the C.P.S. camp stationed at Merom, had shared in some of the first soil conservation demonstrations in the county six years ago. They participated most helpfully in the interpretation of the afternoon.

The director of the Ohio Farm Bureau Advisory Council program, Carl Hutchinson, analyzed both the philosophy and the program of that remarkable piece of adult education. To the seminarians it came both as a surprise and stimulus to discover the scope and intensity of the Farm Bureau activity.

Assisting as consultants for the conference were Roy Miller of Bonebrake Seminary and Alan Jones, director of Merom Institute.

—Victor Obenhaus

Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

I Shall Not Fret

I shall not fret to see an autumn day
Barter cerulean tint for clouds of gray,
Storm harbingers, with rain and wind in tow
Which soon will set their wildest passions free
To kill the summer's beauty and to blow
Her miracles from stem and tree.

I shall not fret, for when the day has spent
Its fury, I shall smile and be content
To see a golden edge bedeck each cloud,
To see as silhouettes against the sun
Tall black and silver rain-wet trees stand proud,
Their naked grace a braver, lovelier one.

—Dorothea O. Benner

Friend of Organized Farmers

• *The National Union Farmer* has published a tribute to the Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti, the Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference: "There has been no stronger advocate of the family-type farmer than Msgr. Ligutti . . . also he is an outspoken defender and supporter of the cooperative movement.

"The 6 foot 2 inch, 52-year-old Monsignor knows farm life from long personal experience, an experience that began as a boy in Italy, extended to the coal field area of Iowa and now embraces the work of the Catholic Rural Life conference out of their headquarters at Des Moines.

"Msgr. Ligutti was born on a farm near Venice, Italy, the farm his family has been cultivating since the year 900 A.D. From his family he has inherited an understanding of the stability and independence that develops from long, successful, stable cultivation of the soil."

Farm Film Foundation

To the Editor of Town and Country Church:

I should like to call your attention to the fact that, because the work of the Farm Film Foundation has expanded so greatly in the last few months, we have had to obtain larger quarters and are now located at 1731 Eye St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., rather than at 744 Jackson Place, N. W.

We have available a list of films endorsed by and available through the Foundation, which we think might be of interest to you. Under the policies set up by the Board of Trustees, the Foundation only accepts films, which are basically educational, while being at the same time interesting and free from objectionable advertising or propaganda.

Under this policy, the Board of Consultants has examined many hundreds of pictures and has only found a very few that pass muster under this policy. However, we are glad to report that pictures are now being made under the advice and consultation of the Foundation which will meet the strict requirements which we have set up and it will not be long before our list has a number of additional very fine films on it.

It is the objective of the Foundation to raise a high standard for 16mm sound pictures and we are going to stick to that standard because we believe in it.

Obviously, it limits the number of films we can accept, but it does assure people that Foundation endorsed pictures will be of high quality and free from the objectionable features that infest so many films in the 16mm field.

(signed) Charles Dana Bennett,
Executive Director

Rogation Sunday in England

At Eynsford, Kent, England, the Rev. H. A. L. Jefferson blessed the silk farm and herb garden at Lullingstone Castle on Rogation Day. Many Episcopal parishes follow the ancient Church of England custom of going in procession to bless formally the seed, the growing crops, the laborers, to the glory of God. Said the Bishop of Chichester, "Let the Church and the Countryside rediscover one another, and who knows what an awakening may take place in the whole life of the Nation. Let us remember these days as days of prayer for livestock and crops. And let us resolve that, not only during war, but in peace time as well, the vital importance of the land shall be fully understood."

Things that are Right with Churches*

W. H. STACY

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things e true, whatsoever things are honest, hatsoever things are just, whatsoever ings are pure, whatsoever things are vely, whatsoever things are of good re- ort; if there be any virtue and if there any praise, think on these things.

—The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians 4:8

Most people want to live in com- unities that have churches. Why? fter more than two decades of ob- rving the interests of church par- cipants and relating them to what olks do in other types of group ctivity I am convinced that there re six major reasons. Briefly stated ese are:

1. Churches help individuals to evelop strengthening religious iths.
2. Churches supply spiritual in- ntives for right living.
3. Churches initiate and support ducational programs.
4. Churches provide opportunity or esthetic enjoyment.
5. Churches promote neighborly ociability.
6. Churches make it possible for ndividuals to function as world itizens.

The following brief explanation f these points makes them more neaningful.

Religious Faiths. A stable person- lity must be oriented around some ort of religious faith. For the ardent Nazi it was belief in Hitler's doctrine of a superior race. A communist may be guided by hope for progress hrough revolution by the wage arner class. Those who worship in Christian churches can integrate heir thinking and consistently ex- band their understanding by com- ng to know more about a Creator of all life. Finding the miraculous power stored in the atom is only new evidence of the greatness of this nseen and ever present God, the Father of Mankind.

Spiritual Incentives. A static position is never attainable in a world of living forces. Just as the farmer continually cultivates his fields to destroy weeds in order to grow profitable crops, those who interpret the Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments and other religious teachings help to cultivate the better types of human endeavor.

Educational Programs. Most of our colleges were established by churches and religious leaders. Although there have been differences related to positions taken by strong personalities or prejudices of the uninformed, religion and education have for the most part gone hand in hand. One evidence of this is the emphasis today among both religionists and educators for a more adequate consideration of the moral and spiritual aspects of educational work. The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man together with respect for the sacredness of individual personalities are concepts without which democratic society cannot function. Their most significant origins are in the teachings of Jesus. Church people study them week by week as they come together for Sunday school and worship.

Esthetic Enjoyment. In the realm of beauty there are unmeasurable experiences and satisfactions. Whether it be in great Riverside church in New York with its magnificent symphony of art and worship or the unpainted shack of a South Carolina mill village in which a negro choir sings spirituals, one finds churches giving their constituents esthetic enjoyment that is above and beyond that of everyday life. This may be in a musical program. It may be in the setting of beautiful architecture or flower decorations. It may be in attention given to the literary beauty of the scriptures. Or it may simply be in the fact that those who attend "spruce up" for the occasion and experience the "lift" that comes from doing together something that takes them away from the humdrum affairs of everyday life.

Neighborly Sociability. Today lodges, organizations, clubs, taverns, movies, schools, and a hundred other competitors capitalize on the fact that neighborly sociability is an important part of life's experience. Individuals develop their personalities through their contacts with others. In pioneer days the church was the principal place where people could become better acquainted. Churches still outrank any other single organization in this respect.

World Citizens. All of our major church organizations have service programs through which their members maintain relationships with people in other parts of the world. In recent years impartial observers have reported that missionary schools and service stations are centers of good will in areas where our political relationships are strained to the breaking point. Church supported rehabilitation programs have reached people where governmental relief has been unable to help. They continue to provide such service with a minimum of overhead and more in the way of personal contacts than is ordinarily supplied by political agencies.

Most of us realize that we are living in one of the most critical periods in history. There are imperfections on all sides. Churches are imperfect. They have differences that can only be explained in terms of perverse human nature and strivings for prestige and glory. They suffer from the growing tendency to popularize such things as power, profit, pleasure and protection.

But if we want our children and grandchildren to have foundations on which they can stand, we must minimize our weaknesses and maximize things that are right and worthwhile. At least six things are right with churches. Let's join hands and work to make them dynamic factors in the lives of more people.

* Revision of "*Some Things that are Right with Churches*" mimeo circular, Extension Service, Iowa State College, 1935.

In the Periodicals

The Methodist Layman, Chicago, Ill., April, 1948, presents "Toward a Community-Serving Rural Church," by Harold F. Kaufman. In this article the author cites "service to youth, stewardship of the natural resources, and cooperation with other groups and agencies in meeting common needs" as services that the rural church can render to the community.

Forth, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., April, 1948, tells about the National Town-Country Church Institute in Parkville, Mo., under the title, "Roanridge Prepares Rural Leaders." This article is accompanied by many illustrations.

In *The Lutheran,* Philadelphia, Pa., March 31, 1948, under the title of "Needs of Rural Churches Studied at American Board Institute," James P. Beasom lists the needs of rural churches as "more pastors and full-time Christian workers"; "parish readjustments"; "longer pastorates"; "more training"; and "rural rehabilitation and expansion." In the issue for April 28th of the same publication, under the title, "We Moved to the Country," Betty Schott, a pastor's wife, tells why it was a good decision.

The Christian-Evangelist, St. Louis, Mo., April 8, 1948, publishes "The Town and Country Church," by Edwin L. Becker, Director of town and country church for the United Christian Missionary Society. Mr. Becker tells of the need to revitalize country churches and says that "local churches in rural areas must be strengthened in their work of religious education, evangelism, stewardship, community service and world outreach." The Church Enlargement Crusade is being launched this year to further that end.

In *The Pastor,* Nashville, Tenn., April, 1948, Leslie B. Bailey writes about his work on the Rocky Mountain Circuit (with headquarters in Ontario, Ore.) under the title of "Modern Prophet of the Long Road." Mr. Bailey says: "In isolated sections, the people judge a pastor's work solely upon his own merit and his personal witness; and disregard for denominationalism is a 'must.' "

In the May issue of the same periodical Roger Ortmayer reviews "Books for the Rural Minister's Library." The books which Mr. Ortmayer has selected as basic for a rural pastor's library are "The Holy Earth," by Liberty Hyde Bailey; "A Study of Rural Society, by J. H. Kolb and E. De S. Brunner; "The Sociology of Rural Life," by T. Lynn Smith; "Farmers in a Changing World" (Yearbook of Agriculture, 1940—U.S.D.A.); "Our Rural Communities," by Laverne Burchfield; "The Church in Our Town," by Rockwell C. Smith; "The Small Town and Country Church," by Edwin A. Hunter; "Rural Life and the Church," by David E. Lindstrom; "The Small Community," by A. E. Morgan; "The Peasants," by W. S. Reymont; "Countryman's Companion," edited by David B. Greenberg; "Rural Parish," by Anna Laura Gebhard; "The Shepherdess," by A. W. Hewitt; "The Story of John Frederick Oberlin," by Augustus F. Beard; and "Rural Worship," by Herbert H. Wintermeyer.

Gospel Messenger, Elgin, Ill., May 15, 1948, is an issue devoted to rural life. Among the articles of interest to those concerned with the rural church are: "How the Rural Church Lives," by Ira W. Moomaw; "Rural People Have Faith in Each Other," by George D. Weybright; "Rural People Keep Close to God," by Cyrus Kiracofe; "Shall the Church Advertise?" by George W. Anglemyer. In the May 22nd issue of the same publication Eugene Smathers discusses "Young People in the Rural Church," their problems and helpful projects.

In *The Christian Index,* Jackson, Tenn., May 6, 1948, U. Z. McKinnon lists ten techniques for successful rural pastoring under the title, "Practical Helps for Preachers."

The American Friend, Richmond, Ind., April 29, 1948, publishes "Rural Church Beauty," by Carolyn E. Cox; and "Christian Rural Goals," by John C. Harvey. In the latter article the author lists the goals as "abundance in production . . . conservation of resources . . . justice for the farmer . . . and freedom for the farmer." Mr. Harvey says: "These goals are best realized in the framework of the family-type, owner-operated farm, and in cooperatives of various sorts."

The Church Advocate, Harrisburg, Pa., May 5, 1948, publishes "The Rural Church," by C. N. Greider, who says: "The work of the church is three-fold namely, Evangelism, Stewardship and Christian Education."

The Mennonite Community, Scottdale, Pa., April, 1948, publishes "Building a Church in a New Area," by Glen and Lois Yoder. This is the picture of the Culp community, in the heart of the Arkansas Ozarks. Glen Yoder is principal of the school and pastor of the Bethel Springs congregation.

Churchways, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., April, 1948, in an article entitled "Define Requirements for Rural Ministry," lists the following requisites for being a successful, consecrated rural minister: "A real sense of vocation for town and country work; a basic and deep love for all people; ability to preach, teach, speak and live with simplicity; a wife with the same sympathetic approach and interest; the ability to be big enough for the small place which he serves; an understanding of agricultural and rural social organization; economic stability (an adequate church plant and rectory, and a salary which will allow him the same benefits as those of the urban ministry)."

The Shield, Cincinnati, Ohio, April, 1948, presents "Problems of the Church in Rural America," by the Rev. Joseph V. Urbain. This is a chapter from the book, *Rural America,* published by the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade. The author is one of the principal journalists writing for the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

The Witness, 135 Liberty Street, New York 6, N. Y., April 22, 1948, is an issue devoted to the work of the Home Missions Council of North America, in commemoration of its fortieth birthday. The articles

lude "Home Missions Council orks with First Americans," by ırk A. Dawber; "Home Missions uncil Helps The Migrant Work-," by Edith E. Lowry; "The ome Missions Front," by William emens; "The Summer Service En-prise," by Louisa R. Shotwell; d "Progress in the Rural South," Harry V. Richardson.

In the *International Journal of ligious Education,* Chicago, Ill., ay 1948, Bernard J. Mulder pre-nts a résumé of the discussions ld at The Conference on the Com-unity and Religious Education der the title, "In city, town, or untry." Of particular interest to ose concerned with rural work are ose discussions on "the rural ag-ultural community" and on "the ral industrial community."

In the *Rural Lutheran,* Minne-olis, Minn., May 1948, E. W. ueller discusses the small town d the small community in an ar-le entitled, "Talking it Over." ne author gives figures indicating at most of our ministers, college esidents, United States senators, vernors, and justices of the su-eme courts were born in small mmunities. He says: "If those of who live in the small com-unity will regard ourselves as e planners of communities in ich people count, the small com-unity can have a great influence in veloping a great people. . . . The adership we have in the church or e state of tomorrow will depend ry largely upon what we do with e small community and rural urch of today."

In *The Christian Advocate,* Chi-go, Ill., May 27, 1948, Edwin T. andall tells the story of the Abra-m Lincoln Friendship train un-r the title, "Spiritual Adventure Wheat."

The Presbyterian Outlook, Rich-ond, Va., May 24, 1948, presents The Cities' Roots are Rural," and ges a vigorous program in country eas.

Forth, 281 Fourth Avenue, New rk 10, N. Y., June 1948, tells how e theological students of Bexley all, the seminary of Kenyon Col-lege, Gambier, Ohio, have renovated and re-established worship services at Bedell Chapel. The article is entitled, "Bexley Students Open Rural Church."

In *Our Church in Town and Country,* Dayton, Ohio, June 1948, under the "Director's Column," B. H. Cain tells about the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, to be held at San Jose, Cal., November 9-11, 1948, and says that the Dayton office "has been informed of the fact that if eighteen men purchase round trip tickets from Chicago to San Jose, a coach will be provided for them."

The Largest Country Church?

To The Editor:

The article, "What is the Largest Open Country Church?" which appeared in the January 1948 issue, has been read with interest. The following information is furnished for the benefit of your readers.

The Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, Rt. 3, Charlotte 3, N. C., is the largest country church in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern). Last year this church reported 942 communicant members—not including baptized infants. (See Minutes of the 87th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1947 edition, page 292, line 6). Rev. J. M. Walker, Sr., is the pastor.

This church is located about eight miles southwest of Charlotte, N. C., on an unnumbered belt road which connects U. S. Highway 29 and N. C. Highway 49. While the church is considered the center of the community there is no village near it. Comparatively few people live within a half-mile radius and the nearest store or filling station is a mile away.

Steele Creek Presbyterian Church was organized in 1760.

The writer was reared in this church and is now a minister in Wilmington Presbytery.

Ben F. Brown
Wallace, N. C.

Rural Church is Repaid

The debt of the city church to the rural church of America is being repaid in the Presbytery of Ozark in an unusual and commendable program of supply for the vacant churches of that presbytery.

Cities have drained our rural populations, and more than half the people of the congregations of the Springfield, Mo., churches is composed of people from the surrounding country.

Under the direction of the Committee on Vacancy and Supply, lay teams from the churches of Springfield and Crane go out once a month to supply the ten vacant churches in the presbytery. These teams are made up of representatives from Sunday school classes, Westminster Fellowship organizations, and missionary societies. The program is not imposed on the churches but rather comes from the churches themselves, growing out of the recognition of existing needs.

For instance, one small church had received nine new members through the New Life Movement and wanted some help in carrying on an active and interesting program for these new members as well as the members of long standing. One of the most valuable results of the plan is the enthusiasm which the teams themselves bring back and the fine Christian fellowship which they experience.

—E. Graham Wilson,
in *Monday Morning*

Convocation Plans

November 9-11 will be great days for the town and country churches of our land, for San Jose, California, will be host to the interdenominational National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country. Programs may be obtained from your denominational board or by writing to the Committee on Town and Country.

It is estimated that approximately 1,000 ministers, ministers' wives, administrators of the church, and those most interested in the church in town and country will attend. If you wish a room in a home, please make application well in advance, mailing this to the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. The Committee cannot be responsible for any request received in its office later than October 29, 1948.

There is adequate hotel space, but the demand is great. If you desire a hotel room be sure to write to a hotel well in advance. In that event you need not write to the Committee on Town and Country.

Marietta College

• E. L. Kirkpatrick informs us concerning the Rural Church Workers Conference, held at Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio, April 19-20. This was described as the "first attempt at a rural pastors' training institute or workshop." Among the suggestions considered were: Can the Preacher Farm? How Can a Community Develop its Resources? The College, The Church, The Community.

As we have noted in recent issues of *Town and Country Church,* a growing number of liberal arts colleges are effectively relating themselves to rural communities and churches in their areas.

Methodist Rural Life Conference

• The Department of Town and Country Work, Division of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, has published reports of six study committees that met in July 1947 at the National Methodist Rural Life Conference, Lincoln, Neb., to develop a program for the rural churches of Methodism and to emphasize the relation between Christianity and agriculture. These reports may be procured from the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y. Titles and prices are given below:

The Methodist Church and the Rural Community, by David E. Lindstrom, Chairman of Commission No. 2. 15c. Includes commentaries on needed policies and changes, race and class, social welfare, rural-urban relations, and Christian leadership.

Land Policy and Church Stability, by Arthur Raper, Chairman of Commission No. 3. 15c. Contains a summary of the findings of the commission, activities of the Methodist church and other private agencies as related to land use, and a list of public agencies operating in fields related to land use and farm tenure.

The Art of Church Cooperation, by Ralph A. Felton, Chairman of Commission No. 5. 20c. Discusses factors and principles; church cooperation within the denomination; and cooperation between denominations.

A National Rural Policy for the Methodist Church, by John Baxter Howes, Chairman of Commission No. 6. 15c. Many suggestions for changes in rural policy for the church and the Department of Town and Country work are reported.

A Program for the Local Rural Church, by Earl D. C. Brewer, Chairman of Commission No. 7. 15c. Objectives and goals, methods, activities, resources and leadership are given attention.

The Christian World View, by Correll M. Julian, Chairman of Commission No. 8. 15c. Discusses man's principal needs: hunger, agriculture and stewardship.

The Convocation Report

• The Report of the fourth National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, held at Rochester, N. Y., in the fall of 1947, is now printed under the title, "Opportunities and Responsibilities of Town and Country Churches." Single copies are available from the office of the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at 25c each postpaid. Cooperating home mission boards are also distributing the Report.

The Enlarged Town & Country Church

• We have doubled the size of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH.

The Committee on Town and Country decided to take this step as a venture of faith. Receipts from subscriptions have thus far been sufficient to provide an eight-page but not a sixteen-page journal. The hope is that there will be many interested cooperators who will say so many good words about TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH that we will have enough subscribers, even at the present subscription rate, to carry the venture.

What You Can Do

There is no central promotion fund for TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. It can only be promoted by the interested boards and agencies and by the ministers themselves. Will you, therefore, take responsibilty for:

1. Asking for circulars and sample copies;
2. Announcing the Journal at ministerial association meetings;
3. Seeing that TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH is announced at all rural church conferences;
4. Sending us material for publication.